

## STRATEGIC DEFENSE AGAINST A LARGER POWER

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL VLADIMER CHACHIBAIA  
Georgian Armed Forces

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**STRATEGIC DEFENSE AGAINST A LARGER POWER**

by

Lieutenant Colonel Vladimer Chachibaia  
Georgian Armed Forces

Dr. Craig Nation  
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013



## ABSTRACT

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The great Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz defines war as “An act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.” Following Clausewitz’s line of reasoning, war is a contest of wills between two adversaries – both trying to impose their will on the other. Since the beginning of the 20th century war technological achievements have changed conventional warfare in many ways. Not long ago two adversary countries needed years to fight conventional wars. New technological developments have shortened the time required to prevail in war, but also made unconventional warfare the most problematic and challenging kind of armed struggle. Clausewitzian theory remains relevant in unconventional warfare. Unconventional warfare, and specifically guerrilla warfare, is not just the war of weak or small nations, but it can be the best way of fighting for small nations like Georgia. The focus of this study will be on strategic options for small nations seeking to defend themselves against a larger power, considering the case of Georgia but also lessons learned from the experience of other countries.



## STRATEGIC DEFENSE AGAINST A LARGER POWER

### Strategic Defense against a Larger Power

What is strategic defense against a larger power? Throughout history there have always been dominate countries and empires which tried to take advantage of small nations. Many nations have been overrun and vanished from history, but others have found strategies to defend against larger power and have survived. Some nations based their strategy on conventional warfare, while others chose the unconventional way. Georgians have always fought using both strategies. Indeed in most cases we used both conventional and unconventional approaches in what may be called combined warfare. Each method relies on geography, population and resources.

Considering the Georgian situation we can discuss two methods of defense. In the first case we defend ourselves by conventional warfare combined with unconventional warfare (combined warfare), and in the second rely only upon unconventional warfare. Unconventional warfare, and specifically guerrilla warfare, is the main tool for the smaller nations to defend themselves. The name guerrilla ("small war") was born at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Napoleon invaded Spain. The Spanish people used partisan tactics and harassed and raided the French army. In this essay I will discuss both combined defense (conventional and unconventional defense together) and unconventional defense. Also I will discuss exhaustion, terrain and weather, center of gravity, and Informational operations (IO/ Psychological Operations- PSYOPs).

First, let's talk about unconventional defense. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, conventional war has been shortened and unconventional methods have become a more important part of warfare. Unconventional warfare in my

opinion is the same as guerrilla warfare, where tactics depend on small group mobility and flexibility. It is very common for small nations to conduct unconventional warfare.

*“Guerrilla warfare is a form of warfare by which the strategically weaker side assumes the tactical offensive in selected forms, times, and places. Guerrilla warfare is the weapon of the weak. It is never chosen in preference to regular warfare; it is employed only when and where the possibilities of regular warfare have been foreclosed”<sup>1</sup>*

For Georgia, guerrilla warfare will be the main method of national defense against a larger power, and in this kind of warfare our main objective will be to exhaust the enemy and demoralize them to gain time for international support. Georgia does not have enough resources and population to support resistance for a long period; we will not focus on protracted war, but rather effective short term fighting and international assistance.

In some countries the effectiveness of unconventional war was based on protracted resistance, and it proved itself in the end. The Chinese resistance in 1937-1945 against Japan is an excellent example of the use of unconventional warfare in this way to achieve a desirable end state. Unlike Japan, the Chinese resistance could draw on nearly unlimited human resources: “With the common people of the whole country mobilized, we shall create a vast sea of humanity and drown the enemy in it”<sup>2</sup>

Is it possible for Georgia to achieve the same results as the Chinese? This is hard to predict, but I think that in our case a strategy of protracted war would be devastating. The main point in the Chinese strategy was to exhaust the enemy, and the territorial scale of the conflict combined with large human resources allowed them to achieve the desired end state. As Mao Zedong put it: “Japan’s military, economic and political-

organizational power is great but quantitatively inadequate, Japan is a comparatively small country, deficient in manpower and military, financial and material resources and she can not stand a prolonged war.”<sup>3</sup>

The opposite situation occurred in the case of Chechnya, when a small nation stood up against a larger power (Russia). With limited manpower, equipment and logistical provision the Chechens fought with courage and sacrifice, and during the first Russia-Chechnya war they achieved victory, but in the second Russia-Chechnya war they were overwhelmed. The Chechens could not prevail in protracted war due to limited human and financial resources.

In the analysis that follows we will look at the history of the Chechen-Russia war and then compare the Chechen and Chinese resistance.

### The Russia-Chechnya War

The conflict over the region began in the 18th century. In about 1720 Russian imperial forces invaded Chechnya in the face of resistance led by Shah Mansur. In 1817 Catherine the Great started new campaigns against Chechnya, and again Chechen tribes revolted against the Russians, but eventually Chechen resistance was exhausted. On November 30, 1922, the Soviet Union established the Chechen Autonomous Oblast, and in 1936 the Chechnya and Ingushetia regions received the official status of an Autonomous Republic (Chechnya-Ingushetia ASSR). On February 23, 1944 about 500,000 Chechens and Ingush were exiled to Kazakhstan. The Soviet government accused them of cooperating with the German invaders, who controlled the western parts of Chechnya-Ingushetia for several months during the winter of 1942/1943. They returned home after Stalin’s death. But Chechens never lost faith in independence;

they waited for the opportunity to separate from Russia, and this opportunity came in 1990 when the USSR started to collapse. The Chechnya-Ingushetia ASSR was renamed the Chechen-Ingush Republic, and on October 1, 1991 the republic was divided into the Chechen Republic and the Ingush Republic. Also in October 1991, Dzhokhar Dudayev was elected president of Chechnya. On November 1, 1991, Dudayev issued a decree of Chechen independence. The Russian federal government refused to recognize Chechen independence and started military preparation to regain control over this territory.

In November 1994, Russia launched its military operations against the newly created Chechen Republic. It was the beginning of the first Russia-Chechnya war. The Russians were badly organized and military operations did not go as well as everybody expected. In the first days, the Chechen forces managed to face the sudden attack with courage and forced the Russian forces to retreat. The Chechens did not have enough ammunition and rifles to fight a conventional war against the Russians; instead, they converted guard units into small irregular units and adopted guerrilla warfare tactics. Later on Russian combat units became their sources of ammunition and weaponry. Russian tactics had not changed since World War II. On December 1994, Russian forces started shelling and bombarding the capital city of Grozny. Dozens of tanks and BMPs entered the city, but soon they were lured and trapped. Chechen small and mobile guerrilla type units attacked them from everywhere, from roofs, from windows, from sewer systems, and so on. The undisciplined and demoralized Russian units became easy targets for the Chechen fighters. In the first days thousand of Russian soldiers were killed and tens of tanks and BMPs were destroyed. Russian atrocities and

brutal behavior toward the local populace led the entire Chechen nation to resist. In February 1995, the Russians finally occupied Grozny, and the battlefield was moved to the mountains. Poorly trained and equipped Russian troops were easily ambushed and killed in the rugged Chechnya landscape.

In August 1996 Russian troops withdrew from Chechnya. But a second Russia-Chechnya war started on August 26, 1999. It was provoked by the warlords Shamil Basayev and Ibn al Khatab, who sought to launch a Holy War or *Jihad* against Russia by invading the neighboring Russian district of Dagestan. In the second war the Russians performed much better than they did earlier. They learned lessons from the first war and used small Special Forces units and snipers to kill and fight with irregular methods, in the same way in which the Chechens fought. By May 2000 the Russians had established direct rule over Chechnya. The war had gone on for so long that Chechens were exhausted, and the international community felt powerless to react because Chechnya was officially part of Russia and any involvement could be considered interference in Russia's internal affairs.

A Georgian defense strategy could be modeled on that of the Chechens, but we see that in the end the Chechens could not hold on to their independence. Our defense mechanism should rely on guerrilla strategy, but we should always keep one question in mind: are we able to wage and sustain a prolonged war? If an enemy's material and technological superiority is obvious, we will adopt unconventional methods. We will convert our conventional units into unconventional groups. We will avoid face to face encounters, knowing that just one of their bombers can destroy all our ground forces with precision air strikes. If forces cannot be defended by air defense capabilities, then

static and fixed tactics will not be acceptable, and all ground elements will be kept in constant movement to avoid annihilation by the enemy's air power. We should remember always that larger powers always will have a dominant Air Force, which will be devastating for our combat units. The Georgian landscape is very rugged and hard; most of the territory of Georgia is covered with mountains. This kind of terrain is good for unconventional warfare. We have to offer the enemy a battlefield selected by us. This will be anywhere and everywhere. In the words of Clausewitz: "Each tries through physical force to compel the other to do his will; his immediate aim is to throw his opponent in order to make him incapable of further resistance."<sup>4</sup> We will make the enemy to do our will; we will engage the enemy when we decide to do so. We will not have fixed positions; we will strike where they least expect it. During the war we may face a lack of logistical support, but we have to keep in mind that our enemy could be our source of supply: "The guerrilla soldier ought always to have in mind that his source of supply of arms is the enemy"<sup>5</sup>. Our first goal is not to overwhelm the enemy. We fight to gain time in order to attract international support.

A second method of defense is combined (conventional and unconventional defense together). If we will decide to engage the enemy in combined warfare, then the technology and equipment of the armed forces has to be modern and capable of defending our conventional troops and achieving major objectives. What are the main threats that small nations face from larger powers? One of the biggest threats is air strikes and airborne/amphibious operations. To neutralize an enemy superiority in air power, we need to have very good and strong air defense capabilities for long, medium and close range engagement. One of the acceptable enemy maneuvers could be

airborne/amphibious operations. Therefore, it is vitally important to have strong air defense and coastal defense capabilities. All units have to be equipped with modern communication systems. Command and control will be the most challenging task, especially given the need to synchronize conventional and unconventional efforts. Clausewitz's "People's War" suggests combining unconventional and conventional efforts to achieve operational goals: "We must imagine a people's war always in combination with a war carried on by a regular army, and both carried on according to a plan embracing the operations of the whole".<sup>6</sup>

Unconventional method could be an enabler for conventional warfare. The main point is to weaken the enemy's moral and psychological condition, cut off the enemy's main supply routes, and create conditions for conventional combat operations. In 1946 the Vietnamese took up arms against the French and made perfect use of a combined strategy to free their country. General Vo Nguyen Giap notes: "In the enemy's rear guerrilla units, in coordination with the regular army, scattered and wore out the enemy, nailed them to their bases, so that our regular army could launch mobile fighting to annihilate them. They turned the enemy rear into our front line and built guerrilla bases as starting points for our regular army's offensive."<sup>7</sup> It is very hard to say how this might work in contemporary Georgia, but we have to learn lessons from the past and keep in mind all the successes that could be acceptable to us based on our culture and traditions.

Not all guerrilla warfare is the same in its nature and character. Nations, as well as revolutionary movements, have used unconventional warfare for different reasons. Few governments can stand up indefinitely to the political, psychological, and economic

stresses of guerrilla warfare.<sup>8</sup> For some, unconventional warfare is the way for national resistance (gaining independence or freedom); while for others it is a means for making money (Columbia's FARC, the Philippines' Abu Sayyaf, etc.).

### The Winter War

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland in 1939-1940 provides an excellent example of a combined strategy. On November 30, 1939, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, launching a frontal attack along the entire front. The USSR's objective was to conquer Finland in a short period of time. The Soviet Union thought that control over Finland would be critical to the defense of the Leningrad.<sup>9</sup> Soviet forces outnumbered the Finns 4:1 in men, 200:1 in tanks and 30:1 in aircraft.<sup>10</sup> The Finnish defense line was known as the *Mannerheim Line*; this was a fortified line with mine fields, embrasures and anti personnel and tank traps and barriers. Finnish resistance frustrated the Soviet forces. The Finnish Army used small unit tactics; their lightly equipped units easily could maneuver against the enemy using "Motti tactics". "Motti" is Finnish military slang for an encircled enemy unit, or the tactic of encircling it. . A *motti* is a double envelopment maneuver, using the ability of light troops to travel over rough ground to encircle an enemy restricted to open terrain or roads. This tactic of envelopment was used extensively by the Finnish forces in the Winter War to good effect. Heavily outnumbered but mobile forces could easily immobilize an enemy many times more numerous.<sup>11</sup> From December 7, 1939 to January 8, 1940 the biggest Motti battle was fought between Finnish and Soviet forces at the Battle of Suomussalmi. Three Finnish regiments enveloped and destroyed two Soviet divisions (already in retreat) as well as a tank brigade trapped on a road. In many cases the Finns used

unconventional methods of fighting; they were well trained and equipped for the winter fights. The Finns could move quickly through the forests and strike weak points. Their small units on skis raided the Soviet Army's rear areas. Finnish snipers were very effective in picking off Soviet troops huddled around camp fires and in day time. Without camouflage Soviet soldiers were easy targets for snipers and machine gunners. Finnish units lacked radio communication systems, but their units were trained so well that they could achieve freedom of movement, and they conducted operations on their own. The Finns used a mobile defense of company and battalion-size raids and ambushes against vulnerable Russian flanks and supply lines. The cumulative effect of these small-scale attacks divided the heavy, road-bound Soviet divisions into smaller sub-units and isolated them from supplies and reinforcements.<sup>12</sup>

At the beginning of the war, the Finns did not have enough uniforms and weapons, but later on they supplied their units with equipment, weapons and ammunition captured from the enemy. Despite a lack of arms, they used what little material they had brilliantly. Their commanders were resourceful; their strategy was sound; their ability to hold their own against a million Russian soldiers with all their airplanes, tanks, and firepower was a miracle. Counterattacks involved lightning guerrilla raids from first one flank, then the other, keeping the Soviets constantly off balance.<sup>13</sup> Finally, because the attack against Finland was judged as illegal, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations on December 14, 1939. The Moscow Peace Treaty was signed in 1940, ceding about 10 percent of Finland's territory and 20 percent of its industrial capacity to the Soviet Union. However, the Soviets could not accomplish their larger objective of conquering Finland. The Finns retained their sovereignty and gained

considerable international goodwill. The Finnish way of fighting and their strategy of defense, where unconventional units fought to create favorable conditions for the conventional units, should be a good experience to learn from. The main objective of the Finnish unconventional units was to weaken Soviet forces by harassing the Soviets' logistical provision, which was vital for regular units. The Finns impacted on the moral of the Soviet soldiers and motivation by harassing, raiding and ambushing them.

Technological superior has not always dictated the winner of the war. The Soviet-Finnish Winter War provides an obvious example. The Soviet war in Afghanistan is another case in point; Afghans defeated the Soviets despite the fact that they possessed modern mechanized units and airpower. The First Chechen-Russia War ended with a peace treaty when Russian President Boris Yeltsin declared a ceasefire in 1996. Chechnya resisted the Russian military with poor equipment and technology. We should not place all our faith in technological superiority, but to succeed in unconventional warfare we have to learn and understand modern technology. Knowing the enemies' technological capabilities will help us find defense mechanisms to counter them. We know that our biggest threat will be the enemy's air capabilities, and to defend our ground forces and critical assets from them it is necessary to have and maintain strong and powerful air defense forces. In the USSR-Finnish war, the Finns had very good air defense artillery, and the Finnish air defense effort was so effective that the Soviet Air Force could not accomplish all assigned missions. So, a combined defense strategy could be quite acceptable for Georgia, but only for a short period of time. The spirit of our soldier is critical as well in waging unconventional warfare: "Guerrillas rely on heroic spirit to triumph over modern weapons".<sup>14</sup> How can we keep

our soldiers' spirit up? We will always remind them what they fight for. Each field commander has to be an example to his soldiers, and therefore it is important to select qualified and respected leaders. We need commanders who will be able to lead their units with courage, personal example, wisdom, discipline, and self sacrifice.

It is very important to train soldiers in unconventional skills. In the Soviet-Finnish War, the Soviet soldiers were not trained for winter fighting, and the Finns used this to their advantage. We must also find the enemy's weak side and structure a fight in which we will have the advantage. In our country this advantage could be difficult terrain and relevant training for our irregular or regular units. Using the Finnish experience we must also train our units in special skills, prepare for severe conditions, and develop special skills with mines and explosive devices. Elite sniper units will have a psychological impact on the enemy. We will use terrain and guerrilla tactics to cut enemy columns or units into smaller groups and then encircle them with light and mobile forces like the Finns did against the Soviet troops. One of Napoleon's tactics was to use flexibility and interior lines to reinforce successes, divide the enemy force, and achieve decisive victory. I can't say that we can achieve decisive victory, but there always is the opportunity we have to try to seize it, using any possible advantage. One of these advantages is Georgian terrain, which is very difficult for the maneuvering of mechanized units, and where narrow and winding roads will allow us to conduct big and small scale ambushes. Rural areas, especially forests and mountains, will provide cover and concealment.

We have devoted some attention to unconventional and combined defense strategy. Let's now analyze exhaustion, the center of gravity, terrain and weather and IO/Psychological Operations in unconventional and combined defense strategy.

### Exhaustion

Exhaustion depends on territorial dimensions and human resources. In some cases it might be a good tool for defenders and in some cases it could be good for the attackers. What do I mean by that? Let's take two examples for comparison. In the China-Japan War the method of protracted war was beneficial for the Chinese. Their guerrilla movement could maintain sufficient personnel very easily because of the size of the population. On the other side, the Japanese could not control the entire territory, because of insufficient force structure. Citing Mao Zedong; "Again by contrast with Japan, China is a very big country with vast territory, rich resources, a large population, and plenty of soldiers and is capable of sustaining a long war."<sup>15</sup> During the war the population of China was 455,590,000, and of Japan 69,254,148. The Russia-Chechnya war is a different kind of case. Chechnya's population was not large enough to fill losses in guerrilla units. There were more than 300,000 Russian troops deployed in that small region, and the Russians were able to reorganize and consolidate units any time. In the beginning everything worked well for Chechnya but then prolonged and protracted war exhausted Chechnya's resistance. Russia's population was 145,274,019 and Chechnya's 1,103,686. In these two facts we clearly see how the territorial dimension and population play a role in a strategy of exhaustion. Georgia (69,700 km<sup>2</sup>) is not as large a territory as China (9,598,086 km<sup>2</sup>), but it is larger than Chechnya (15,300 km<sup>2</sup>). The population of Georgia is 4,661,473. Considering these facts it will be very hard for

Georgia to maintain a long term unconventional war. Guerrilla warfare can succeed in destroying the enemy and forcing him to quit the country he has invaded only when the size of the army is commensurate with the area of land he is occupying.<sup>16</sup>

### Center of Gravity (COG)

An enemy's center of gravity may include national command elements, war production assets, infrastructure and the enemy's will to fight. The COG is something which, by targeting, we can achieve victory. FM-100-7, chapter 3 describes the concept of Center of Gravity:

The essence of operational art is concentrating friendly military forces and resources against the enemy's main sources of strength (strategic center of gravity) in a manner that provides the JFC with the strategic and operational advantage and the initiative. The destruction, dislocation, or neutralization of the enemy center of gravity should prove decisive in achieving strategic objectives. Similarly, the JFC must identify the theater friendly center of gravity and protect it.

The enemy center of gravity exists at all levels of war. A center of gravity is the foundation of capability--what von Clausewitz called "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends...the point at which all our energies should be directed." (On War, 1976) The center of gravity may ... be seen in more complex components or abstract terms, such as *the enemy's alliance, solidarity, or national will* and in actual examples such as *strategic reserves, C<sup>2</sup>, logistics, industrial base*, and so forth. The center of gravity is most useful at the operational level of war as an analytical tool to focus the effort against the enemy's strength.

COG is not a permanent phenomena; it can change during the course of a war. In the Soviet-Finnish War, Finns attacked the Soviet military with a cumulative strategy using many small units. I believe that the Finns determined the enemy's morale to be the COG. At the end of this war the Soviets were so demoralized that they abandoned their main objective of the conquest of Finland. With international support, the Finns could conclude the war with only minor benefits for the Soviets.

In the Chechnya –Russian war the Chechens also identified the enemy's morale as a COG. They attempted to target the enemy's morale using IO/PSYOPs. In response, in the first stage of the war, the Russians identified their opponents' COG as the Chechen leadership. Later on it changed and the COG became the insurgency's sources of financing.

In preparing to defend the homeland, it is vitally important to identify your and enemy's COG. Throughout history, many would-be conquerors have failed largely because they did not fully appreciate morale as a center of gravity.<sup>17</sup> We have to take into consideration that if we do not defend our COG our success will be doubtful, and we must permanently attack the enemy's COG to meet our strategic objectives. We can gain initiative if we determine the enemy's COG and attack or damage it.

The strategic COG in the context of a combined defense could be an enemy's aviation. If we are capable of defending our troops from the enemy's aviation, then we can fight with them on the ground in even conditions, because our terrain allows us to fight with economy of forces and maximum effect. We should remember that in combined defense we will have fixed combat positions; our air defense capabilities will help us to prevent the enemy from achieving the objective of maximum destruction of our troops on the ground. Also, we should prevent airborne assaults in our rear or near our capital city. From the enemy's perspective our COG could be the capital and the government.

The enemy's strategic COG in an unconventional defense strategy could be morale, while ours could be the ability to sustain combat. In unconventional defense we will not have fixed positions; our strategy will be based on systematic small unit attacks

and destruction of the enemy's forces. Unconventional warfare is generally more protracted than conventional warfare. Historical examples show that morale is a decisive factor in gaining victory.

### Terrain and Weather

Guerrillas should only offer battle when the terrain favors them.<sup>18</sup> Landscape will be our friend. On our territories we will have an advantage over the enemy, because the enemy will be a stranger and will not be familiar with our nature and landscape. Mostly we will fight in fog and cloudy weather to avoid being exposed to enemy surveillance capabilities. "Guerrilla strategy must be based primarily on alertness, mobility, and attack. It must be adjusted to the enemy situation, the terrain, the existing lines of communication, the relative strengths, the weather and the situation of the people".<sup>19</sup>

In the Soviet-Finnish war the Soviets did not understand terrain and weather, which finally led them to a strategy of attrition. During the winter the Gulf of Finland began to freeze over; encounters prior to this were generally ship-to-shore gunnery duels with little strategic effect.<sup>20</sup> Terrain and weather had a big impact on Soviet failure. The Soviets could not maneuver with large units in this terrain but small Finnish units were very flexible.<sup>21</sup>

To conduct combined or unconventional warfare in Georgia is quite workable, because Georgian relief and nature allows us to rationally divide our forces and disperse them. Valleys and gorges, which could be axes of approach for the enemy, are easy to defend with small, well equipped and maintained units. However, maintaining and sustaining these units may become a problem if fighting becomes long term.

Mao understood the potency of the territorial dimension and used it as a tool to exhaust the enemy. “It is a vast country with great resources and tremendous population, a country in which the terrain is complicated and the facilities for communication are poor. All these factors favor a protracted war; they all favor the application of mobile warfare and guerilla operations. The establishment of innumerable anti-Japanese bases behind the enemy's lines will force him to fight unceasingly in many places at once, both to his front and his rear. He thus endlessly expends his resources”.<sup>22</sup>

Terrain played a big role in our country's history. Rough terrain allows us to defend our country with economy of forces. “The nature of the country may be such as to contribute to the facility of a national defense. In mountainous the people are always most formidable; next to these are countries covered with extensive forests.”<sup>23</sup> Our forefathers wisely used our terrain to destroy their enemies. Historically, narrow valleys have always been hard to maneuver for large units, while small and mobile units easily stopped them by hitting them from different sides. In February and March 1921, Georgia waged war against the Bolsheviks whose forces approached along several axes of attack; one of which was from the north over the Caucasus Mountains through the valley of Darialy. Only five Georgians with two machine guns and one skirmisher could hold off an advancing Red Army Division for some time. It is also important to understand the impact that weather has on warfare. “Fog, mist, and strong wind with driving snow or rain contribute to the success of an attack.”<sup>24</sup> When fighting with either conventional or unconventional strategy leaders should understand what weather conditions are the most favorable for the adversaries and avoid operations during that

time period. During the War of 1812, Napoleon did not consider weather conditions, an oversight that cost him the war. The same thing happened during World War II, when the Germans were not equipped and ready for the severe Russian winter and their troops were not able to fight.

In the Russia-Chechnya War Russian forces performed badly in mountainous and urban areas; they lacked proper training and equipment. Chechens lured the Russian into the city and fought against them in urban areas. Chechens tried to exhaust the Russian in cities as much as they could, and then they moved to the mountains. But can Georgians fight in the same way? I have some doubt about that; cultural background and traditions also play a big role in waging unconventional warfare. Georgians are very sensitive toward historical values. During the Russia-Chechnya War, the Russians bombed the capital city Grozny, hoping to compel the Chechens to surrender. The Chechens responded that the city was built by communists, and that they therefore had no objection to its destruction. Georgians could use cities as an arena for fighting, but considering our culture and values it is most likely that we will try to avoid fighting in urban areas, and we will try instead to dominate and control the forest and mountainous regions to resist the enemy's overwhelming manpower, weaponry, and air support.

### IO/Psychological Operations

In the fight against aggression Information Operations (IO) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPs) will play a decisive role. The purpose of IO and PSYOPs is to break the enemy's will to fight and gain public support. Clausewitz recognized that besides the destruction of military power and the conquest of a country, it is vitally important to subdue an enemy's will to fight, and force them into signing a peace.<sup>25</sup>

The purpose of IO and PSYOPs is not only to break the enemy's will to fight, but also to gain international support, which will be essential to keeping our independence. The Finns used IO and PSYOP very successfully against the Russians in 1939-1940. They gained huge sympathy with international society, and many countries were willing to assist the Finns with their fight. At least eleven countries, including America, Britain, and Italy, made significant material donations to the Finns.<sup>26</sup> Because the attack was judged to be illegal, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations on December 14, 1939. The Finns retained their sovereignty and gained considerable international goodwill.

A very important goal is to strengthen Georgian national will. All Georgians, no matter what their political views, have to stand up against the aggressors. The people and government have to unite behind the same goal. Before the war there were two different schools of thought in Finland: one that Germany would eventually aid Finland against the Soviet Union, and the other that the Soviet Union was a guarantee for peace against Nazi Germany. But eventually neither of these schools of thought proved to be correct. The Finns came to understand that they could only rely on themselves, and that they were united by one objective. Even most of the Finnish communists stood up against the Soviets.

In many cases morale will be the strategic COG. It is possible to defeat an enemy, destroy its industry, and occupy its land. It might be possible to subjugate an enemy in the short term. But if the spirit of resistance burns in the hearts of its people, one cannot claim victory.<sup>27</sup> In the Russia-Chechnya War, Chechens used brutality and atrocities as a mechanism to achieve psychological superiority over Russian forces (though it should

be noted that Chechen behavior was also a response to Russian atrocities). The internet and media were widely used as instruments for stimulating international concern over the situation in Chechnya and conducting PSYOPs to shape and demoralize Russian public opinion. Chechens filmed brutal killings and sent them by internet all over Russia with the message “if you come, this is what is waiting for you” or, addressing Russian mothers, “do not send your sons or they will die a terrible death.” In fact, in the First Russian-Chechen War Russian troops were so demoralized and Russian public opinion was so much against the conflict that the Russian government was required to sign a peace treaty in 1996. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the Spanish resistance against French invaders, Spain used methods of extermination. The Spanish general and guerrilla leader Francisco Espoz y Mina (17 June 1781– 24 December 1836), killed four of the enemies’ officers or soldiers for every one of his own that was killed. In this manner he succeeded in terrifying the enemy. We can not accept methods similar to those used by the Chechens or Spanish in 19<sup>th</sup> century to break the enemy’s will to fight. Even though we will fight unconventional warfare, and methods and behavior will also be unconventional, we must maintain the discipline and behavior of our fighters; our FM for ROE have to be in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. We have to understand that international society will not accept and support this kind of action. Improper behavior will hurt us rather than help us. Today some guerrilla organizations use terrorism as an instrument of fighting, they try to intimidate the population using explosions, murders and so on. Our effort will be to gain support among the population using all informational capabilities available. We have to deliver the message that we are fighting for our freedom and for our future. If we use terrorist

methods then the whole idea will lose its importance and we will lose credibility in the eyes of the domestic population and international community and organizations, which is vitally important for us.

Sun Tzu, in his *Art of War*, wrote:

In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.

Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

One of the interpretations of Sun Tzu's thought is to use non lethal effort such as IO\PSYOPs to achieve an objective. Sun Tzu thought that it was possible to lead friendly forces to victory without engaging the enemy directly. We have to create an informational environment that discourages an enemy from executing their plan. We have to persuade them that if they come they will find their graves and they will face strong and robust resistance.

Spreading information and explaining to people why we should fight against invaders is very important for us. All scholars of guerrilla warfare and leaders of guerrilla movements admit the importance of IO\PSYOP, or as some people call it propaganda. In IO\PSYOP one of the objectives is to gain and maintain local support. As Mao says: "The people are the water. Our armies are the fish". If public opinion is against guerrilla movement, then everything is fated to fail.

Fighting with unconventional and combined strategy is a very dangerous task. We know that in both cases we will use guerrilla methods as an aspect of defense, and at the same time we should remember that guerrillas may not be recognized as lawful

combatants because they will not be uniformed as regular units, and may not be accorded the protections of the Geneva Conventions. Our soldiers have to realize that in any situation we must maintain morale and discipline.

### Conclusion

All small nations evaluate strategic options to defend themselves against a larger power. Since the beginning of the 20th century war technological achievements have changed conventional warfare in many ways. New technological developments have shortened the time required to prevail in war, but also made unconventional warfare the most problematic and challenging kind of armed struggle. Combined and unconventional warfare, and specifically guerrilla warfare, is not just the war of weak or small nations, but it can be the best way of fighting for small nations.

Small nations conducting guerrilla warfare based on national resistance must remember that time and people are limited. Small nations can't fight for long periods of time, because eventually they would exhaust their people and resources. I assume that unconventional warfare cannot achieve victory in the short term. It is a long term process, and in exhausting the enemy small nations have to be careful not to exhaust themselves.

In guerrilla warfare the population is a generator and source of recruitment. In Georgia the population is not as large as it was in China or even in Finland. We saw what happened with Chechnya, they simply did not have enough combatants to cover the whole territory and exhaust Russian pressure. Eventually, they exhausted themselves. "The main goal of the fight must be destruction of the enemy manpower. Our own manpower should not be exhausted from trying to keep or occupy land".<sup>28</sup>

General Giap's quotation is valid when we are fighting conventionally and with fixed frontiers. But in unconventional warfare we need enough people to spread all over Georgia and keep the enemy busy and drive them to exhaustion.

In a short term fight we have to use guerrilla warfare that will prevent and delay the enemy's forward advance. Meanwhile we will have some time to activate political instruments to involve all international, governmental and non governmental organizations to deter and prevent aggression. When I talk about a strategy of defense, I often use the word resistance because we can resist. But whether resistance by itself can achieve victory is a big question mark. Although I do not conclude that victory over a stronger power is impossible, everything depends on the political and economic condition of the invader.

Finally, any small nation before engaging the enemy must answer several questions. What methods will they use to defend the homeland? What is the enemy's, and their own, COG, according to the available intelligence information and analyses? Where should the fight be conducted (urban areas, forests, mountains or somewhere else) and how will terrain shape the tactics to be used? What informational environment must be created to attract internal and external attention, for friends and enemies as well? What will be the combat capabilities (regular forces, militia, reserve component and so on)? How, to recruit and train new soldiers? What is going to be status of supply and how to keep going to maintain combatants? What will C2 look like? Answering these questions will help to shape and organize resistance. But one must always remember that success in this kind of fight is feasible if international society can be mobilized and convinced to respond as soon as it possible.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "Mao Tse-tung on the war of the flea," in Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C. : Brassey's, 2002), 42

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

<sup>5</sup> Che Guevara, "Guevara on Guerrilla War: The Base," in Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002), 162

<sup>6</sup> "Carl von Clausewitz: People's War," in *Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and other Terrorists from around the World and throughout the Ages*, ed. Walter Laqueur (New York, NY : Reed Press, 2004)

<sup>7</sup> General Vo Nguyen Giap "Strategy and Tactics of Vo Nguyen Giap," in Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002), 63

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Major Gregory J. Bozek, "Getting the Doctrine Right," in *The Soviet-Finnish War, 1939-1940* (Ft. Leavenworth, K.S.: U.S. Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1993), 26

<sup>10</sup> "Winter War," available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_War); Internet; accessed 4 January 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Michael R. Lwin, *Great Powers, Weak States and Asymmetric Strategies* (Monterey, C.A.: Naval Postgraduate School, December 1997), 45

<sup>13</sup> William R. Trotter, "A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War Of 1939 – 40," available from <http://www.ralphmag.org/winter-warZJ.html>; Internet; accessed 4 January 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "Mao Tse-tung on the War of the Flea," in Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C. : Brassey's, 2002), 45

<sup>16</sup> "Wojciech Chrzanowski: The Polish Experience," in *Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and other Terrorists from around the World and throughout the Ages*, ed. Walter Laqueur (New York, NY : Reed Press, 2004)

<sup>17</sup> Joseph L. Strange, and Richard Iron, "Center of Gravity: What Clausewitz Really Meant," available from [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq\\_pubs/0735.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/0735.pdf) ; Internet; accessed 5 January 2008

<sup>18</sup> Taber, *War of the Flea*,160.

<sup>19</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*.

<sup>20</sup> Michael R. Lwin, *Great Powers, Weak States and Asymmetric Strategies* (Monterey, C.A.: Naval Postgraduate School, December 1997),42

<sup>21</sup> Bozek, "Getting the Doctrine Right."

<sup>22</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*.

<sup>23</sup> "Antoine Henri de Jomini: National Wars" in *Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and other Terrorists from around the World and throughout the Ages*, ed. Walter Laqueur (New York, NY : Reed Press, 2004)

<sup>24</sup> "Johann von Ewald: Cunning, Skill, Speed, Secrecy," in *Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and other Terrorists from around the World and throughout the Ages*, ed. Walter Laqueur (New York, NY : Reed Press, 2004)

<sup>25</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 90.

<sup>26</sup> Michael R. Lwin, *Great Powers, Weak States and Asymmetric Strategies* (Monterey, C.A.: Naval Postgraduate School, December 1997),51

<sup>27</sup> Joseph L. Strange, and Richard Iron, "Center of Gravity: What Clausewitz Really Meant," available from [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq\\_pubs/0735.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/0735.pdf) ; Internet; accessed 5 January 2008

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